

**Neighborhood Ten Study
Committee Meeting #4
January 27, 2005
Land Use and Zoning**

Committee members present: Ravi Sundaram, John Moukad, Sandra Uytterhoeven, Peter Hiam, Peter Sturges, Joan Marszalek, Henry Lukas, Josh Rowland, Bill Forster, Rebekah Kaufman

Staff present: Taha Jennings, Elaine Thorne, Les Barber, Roger Boothe

Meeting handouts:

- Zoning Ordinance Basics (Neighborhood Ten)
- City Zoning Districts Map
- Neighborhood Ten Map
- City Historical Districts Map
- Virtual neighborhood walk-through (Powerpoint)

Zoning, Land Use, and Urban Design

Les Barber, the Director of Land Use and Zoning for the Community Development Department, and Roger Boothe, the Director of Urban Design for the Community Development Department, gave a presentation on zoning, land use, and urban design in Neighborhood Ten.

The presentation was centered on the Zoning Ordinance Basics (Neighborhood Ten) packet of information, which was distributed to the Committee members. The handout included information on the background and history of zoning in Cambridge, as well as the roles of the City Council, Inspectional Services, the Planning Board, the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA), and the Community Development Department in the current zoning process. There was also discussion of the approval process for changes to the zoning ordinance.

Les Barber and Roger Boothe presented a slideshow and conducted a virtual “neighborhood walk through” of Neighborhood Ten in order to help visualize what is allowed and/or currently existing in each of the zoning districts in the neighborhood. For this presentation, the zoning districts in Harvard Square were not discussed in detail. The zoning districts discussed included:

- Residence A-1 and A-2
- Residence B
- Residence C-1
- Office 1
- Residence C-2
- Residence C-3
- Business A-1
- Business A
- Parkway Overlay District
- Open Space District

Committee questions/comments:

Comments and questions from the Committee included clarification on what is allowed under the current zoning in Neighborhood Ten, as well as procedural questions regarding the zoning ordinance in general.

Someone asked if adult bookstores are permitted under current zoning. Another committee member asked if in-law apartments are allowed. A question was asked if there are any religious exemptions in the zoning ordinance. Another committee member asked if it is possible to demolish a structure and rebuild on the site as of right. Someone also wanted clarification on parking requirements. A committee member requested information on the build-out for Neighborhood Ten. Also, how much of a structure can be renovated before it is considered a demolition. Someone asked specifically about the Dunkin Donuts on Massachusetts Avenue and how the development was permitted.

There were questions regarding appeals procedures for zoning decisions, procedural requirements for subdividing lots, and who is responsible for monitoring conformance to zoning. Someone also asked if there are any regulations to protect small-scale residential districts that are adjacent to higher density districts (specifically Residence C3).

Discussion

The Committee then discussed zoning in Neighborhood Ten in the context of issues currently facing the neighborhood. The Committee was also asked to begin to think about issues and how they might translate into the actual zoning recommendations for Neighborhood Ten. In order to facilitate the discussion, a blank neighborhood map was used to help the committee visualize what and where the major issues facing the neighborhood are, and how they relate to each other. The discussion would continue at the next committee meeting.

The issues discussed are summarized below:

Neighborhood wide:

- Affordable housing:
 - Mixed income housing and in-law apartments*
 - 80% surveyed support affordable housing in Neigh. Ten*
- Commercial signage regulations
- What is the potential for buildout in the neighborhood – housing (sqr. ft), commercial (sqr. ft.)

Fresh Pond Parkway:

- Livability, and commercial character along the parkway
- Traffic
- Accessibility to businesses and the neighborhood
- Accessibility across highway to Fresh Pond Reservation
- Lack of a sidewalk on Huron Avenue along Fresh Pond Reservation.
- Lack of a pedestrian feel

Aberdeen Avenue:

- Future of Railroad line
- New housing (condominiums) behind library – 55 units (7-8 affordable)

Huron and Concord Avenues:

- Confusing left turn lane at Huron Ave and Fresh Pond Parkway Huron Village
- Huron Drug closing, Post Office was a neighborhood amenity
- Walden – Huron retail area
- Maintain Huron Village
- Lack of sufficient parking
- Lack of Parking on Concord (between Huron and Walden)
- Urban design of new buildings

Mount Auburn Street and Hospital:

- Mount Auburn hospital expansion:
 - Likely to need project review, special permit review*
 - What else can be reviewed at Mount Auburn Hospital?*
- Parking spaces vs. Bicycle lanes
- Community opposition to Duck Tours on Brattle Street or through neighborhood